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MAR 11 1954

Yellow

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Soviet Held Lend-Lease Merchant Fleet

1. Under the Lend-Lease Act, 122 merchant vessels over 1,000 gross registered tons were loaned to the USSR by the United States during World War II. The total included 110 freighters, nine tankers, and three combination passenger-cargo vessels. In connection with the Italian/USSR reparations agreement two additional United States freighters were loaned to the USSR.

2. Of the total of 124 vessels mentioned above, four were lost and twenty-five returned to the United States before the end of World War II. Since the war, one tanker and four freighters have been lost; seven tankers and one freighter have been returned to the United States, leaving a present total of eighty-two Lend-Lease vessels under the Soviet flag.

3. Seventy-nine freighters totalling 494,214 gross registered tons, two combination passenger-cargo vessels totalling 9,274 gross registered tons and one tanker of 7,061 gross registered tons amounting to a combined total of 510,549 gross registered tons of Lend-Lease shipping is at present under Soviet operation and control.

4. As of mid-1953 Lend-Lease vessels comprised approximately twenty-five percent of the total gross registered tons of vessels over 1,000 gross tons, in the Soviet merchant fleet. The eighty-two vessels in the Lend-Lease fleet, however, made up only about twelve or thirteen percent of the total number of vessels. The relative high percent of total tonnage made up by Lend-Lease vessels in contrast to the percent of the total number of vessels represented by Lend-Lease craft is indicative of the average large size of the Lend-Lease vessels. Of a total of 104 vessels of a gross registered tonnage between 5,000 and 7,500 in the Russian fleet in 1949 seventy-two were Lend-Lease. Although there have been additions to merchant fleet since 1949 that would tend to lessen the importance of Lend-Lease vessels to Russian capabilities the above fleet characterization is essentially true today.

5. Condition of all vessels in the Soviet merchant fleet is generally poor. In the years 1951-1953 at least thirty-two of the eighty-two Lend-Lease vessels underwent major repairs or overhauls in Western yards. These excessive dry dock and hull repairs were apparently necessitated by lack of suitable ship maintenance programs and/or poor operating procedures. It is believed that the poor condition of these vessels when they were put into the repair yards is generally representative of the condition of all Lend-Lease vessels and of the condition of the entire merchant fleet.

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6. The above remarks pertain only to the status of the merchant vessels transferred to the government of the U.S.S.R. and do not include some 526 naval craft and twenty-nine small army watercraft that were also transferred to the Soviet government, a large number of which have not been returned to the United States Government.

John E. Cuttrell  
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Research and Reports

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